

Meet Steve Best, Mark Twain National Forest deputy forest supervisor

My full name is Michael Stephen Best but I go by “**Steve.**” I am married to “Mary Joe” and we just celebrated our 23rd wedding anniversary.

I was born in Houston, Texas and grew up in a very rural area in east Texas about 20 miles from Lufkin, Texas. My grandfather was a small scale farmer/rancher and supplemented his income and livelihood by hunting, fishing and trapping.

I went to Stephen F. Austin University in Nacogdoches, Texas and received a Bachelor of Science in Forestry with a Wildlife emphasis; a double major in Biology in 1982 and a Master of Science in Forestry with a wildlife emphasis in 1988.

I started my career on the Davy Crockett National Forest in Texas as a term forestry technician. I was on the marking crew for about 2 years and then was selected as a wildlife biologist trainee in 1988. I was there from about 1985 until 1999 and worked my way up to district wildlife biologist position where I mainly dealt with red-cockaded woodpeckers. I was active in the prescribed burning program as well as wild fire suppression.

In 1999, I was selected as the forest wildlife biologist on the Ozark-St. Francis National Forest in Russellville, Arkansas, where I worked until 2004.

I was the district ranger for the Williams Ranger District on the Kaibab National Forest in Williams, Arizona from 2004 to 2007 and the district ranger on the Brush Creek/Hayden Ranger District, Medicine Bow- Routt National Forest and Thunder Basin National Grasslands 2007 to 2012.

I was the National Making Tracks coordinator for the forest Service from 2012 to 2014 located in Edgefield, South Carolina, which is the headquarters of the National Turkey Federation.

I was selected Mark Twain National Forest deputy forest supervisor March of 2014 and work out of the headquarters office in Rolla, Missouri.